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THE MORROW COUNTY FARM BUREAU—ITS AIMS AND ACTIVITIES

L. A. HUNT, County Agent.

In spite of the fact that medieval history has several examples of agrarian societies which were organized and did considerable work in modern times, there has been no really definite constructive program of farm organization developed until within the last fifty years. Its need has been long realized. The various and vital problems which affect the agricultural interest of each locality are too oftentimes solved in silence and the results of long and costly experiments conducted by individuals are of no advantage, never heard of by the mass of farmers, both state and national, go unsupported by a united demand from their people most interested because of lack of a definite motive force, while every other organization in the United States has for a great many years been profiting by organized work, or gain planning, and organized direction; the vast agricultural people of these United States have been left in the lurch, while at the present time they have invested in their name nearly 60 per cent of the total wealth of the country and have enumerated one-third of the population of the country, their interests are less cared for and their problem less considered and their voice less heard than that of any branch of industry in the United States. Every other industry has found by example and has profited by organized efforts, and organized development, and it has remained for the farmers to be the last ones to adopt this principle which has proven so profitable to every other industry. This is no time for past recriminations or discussion of past problems, but it is a time for the development of a staunch Americanism, and the fact that there are two mass bodies of the American people wrestling in war like grasp, renders all the more necessary that there should be some intermediary force that would assist in the solution of these problems. The efforts that have been made by the American Legion in establishing Americanism in the country is to be commended, but powerful as they are, great need is apparent for more support and this support should come, will come and must largely come from the great bodies of the most conservative people in the world today, the agricultural class of America.

Past History of Agrarian Organization.

It was about the year 1863 that the Farmers Alliance was organized and in the stress of the Civil War,

action was taken, resulted in the organization of a Bureau in one of the departments of the Cabinet where agricultural was considered as a vital factor. It was in the eighties that the organization of the Grange in co-operation with the efforts of the Farmers' Alliance, succeeded in getting this organized as a separate department of the Cabinet, but it was not until the 90's that the real force of this department began to be felt when more and more definite farm organization began to take shape. The Farmers' Alliance was a vital factor in the development of agriculture but its race was not long in the running. Several peculiar mistakes interfered and it died a premature death. The Grange has lived longer has done a great deal of good and will probably always remain as a vital factor in many communities. Its activities are largely social and semi-political, and while furnishing a great deal of room for expression, provides little room for definite action. The Farmers' Union of one of the most powerful and most potent factors in the grain section of the United States was organized entirely as a marketing organization and while there has been times that it attempted some political work it has been practically entirely a marketing organization and along this line has accomplished tremendous steps for advancement and there is no community into which it has gone but what has felt the encouragement of a new and greater prosperity for its people. Their influence has uniformly been for the advancement of the prosperity of its members and of the community as a whole. All of these organizations are more or less secret and are only eligible to those who are duly elected to its membership.

Early History of the Department of Agriculture.

Among the first attempts made by this department, when it was early formed was the sending of specially prepared scientists to various localities to deliver lectures to farmers. These men had a theoretical knowledge of agriculture which was too often not reinforced by practical experience or by knowledge acquired of local conditions. Next came the demonstration train which was quite a step in advance. It was supported by the leading railroad systems and by Agricultural Colleges and was another one of these expeditions which were necessary in the final evolution of the agricultural development to that state that must be reached in this country and which has already been reached in foreign countries. Following this came the

demonstration agent, who went from farm to farm putting in practice or showing the farmers how to put in the practice, definite plans which had been proved out at the center many miles removed from place of application. While this was very valuable and while all these things were accomplishing considerable good they were open to one decided drawback which long ago made itself manifest and which is now in process of being at least partially eradicated.

The Basis Was Wrong

It has been found that it is not enough for the agent in the field to have a scientific knowledge of agriculture, it is not enough that different problems should be brought to the farmers attention, in fact, it has proven that this is not even always necessary. These men and these experiments were all well conducted and the men who had charge of them, many of them were good men in their line but the trouble was that they did not have the sympathetic touch which they came into contact and that many of the problems that they discussed were not of vital need to the farmers or that the need was not recognized by them.

The Origin of the Farm Bureau.

It remains then, until 1911 for farmers in the State of Illinois to undertake something entirely new and a meeting was called in the County Seat of De Kalb County, of a number of farmers who were intensely interested in agriculture as practical men and they decided that they would undertake to get one of these scientific men to come to live upon the ground to get his feet and his hands into the soil, and apply after a practical study of their actual working condition, the theories that he had learned in agricultural study and arrange, if possible, the practical application of these theoretical principles in working conditions, and therefore, Mr. Eckheart, was chosen from the Agricultural College and put in as the first County Agent ever employed as such in the United States. The experiments were placed for three years duration, if at the end of that time he had given no definite results he would be given his passport and told to seek other territory. What were the results may be best judged by the fact that practically every agricultural county in the state of Illinois is now very thoroughly organized, that they have organized probably the first farm bureau in the United States and the farmers themselves after careful consideration of the problem facing them are sound business men have put up their hard earned dollars out of their own pockets and are hiring a State Secretary for the State Organization and are paying him the splendid salary of \$10,000.00 per year to look after the interest of the farmers of the standpoint of the State as a whole. If those hardheaded men have done this much it is safe to assume that the experiments have been

a success. In seven years' time the farm Bureau program has increased by leaps and bounds until at the beginning of April of last year there were nearly one-half million farmers enrolled in active membership in active organizations throughout the counties of these United States. During the present winter a strenuous campaign is being put on with the idea and the hope that before the end of another April that at least one million farmers will be enrolled under the banner of the Farm Bureau of the United States. The National Organization is being put upon its feet and the active co-operation of the farmer of the Nation seem to be finally and at last assured.

Politics Has No Part in the Program

It is not to be thought of by any who are giving serious consideration, to this idea that politics will be allowed to enter in the habit as has so often characterized its adoption and so often organizations for the farmers with the idea of handling as many complex agricultural, marketing and business problems and its object is to protect the farmer and give him a mouthpiece to speak along any of the lines that may properly come under Farmer Business. It is felt by many people that the time has now come to revise our view point of office holders. They should be chosen in the same manner that a farmer or manufacturer would hire a skilled artisan or mechanic. Efficiency should be and will be the test. The personality of the man in so far as it does not effect his efficiency will more and more cease to be a vital factor. We must get away from the fact that our office holders are the guardians of the people. They do not require any guardian. The public conscience is at last awakened and all that is required is a method of expression, that will enable a general expression of business principles for this, and this alone is the essence of good government, and further an organization or a number of organizations representing different industries, that will have a good deal to say towards compelling the adoption of these good principles by the chosen spokesman of the people who will act not from the standpoint of guardian but as men who are there to do the bidding of men who are perfectly capable of doing their own thinking.

The Farm Bureau Built From the Ground Up.

The Farm Bureau differs from any other organizations in that it is not organized from the top down but built from the ground up. It is based upon the elemental requirements of the individual composing the various social units of the states and provides for their solution and expression. Each locality in an organized county where the Farm Bureau has taken hold has its local organization whose particular province is to look after local conditions and is a working organization for the state program to its own locality and is a

working organization for the solution of those problems which are peculiar to its own locality and are not comparable with those of other projects. Where a number of communities have the same problems of common interest a group committee is organized with committeemen of each of these localities, forming therein a community committee. Where more than two counties or numerous counties have a common problem, a state committee is composed in the same way. In this way the results and the solution of problems found in any particular localities can be carried to the last interested community in this connected chain of individual committeemen and so the business of the farmers are taken care of in that particular line of research or investigation.

The Farm Bureau in Morrow County

In applying the Farm Bureau plan to Morrow County, the executive committees of farmers who have met from time to time to consider the problems of this locality has decided upon the adoption of ten projects for the major operations of the County Agent and the Farm Bureau, and in holding the various local meetings, and planning for local work, the operations of the Farm Bureau committees in various localities have adopted such parts of the County plan as is suited to the need of such locality.

Wheat Varieties Fertilizing

This project is in the charge of S. L. Stevens of Lexington. It is considered by the Farm Bureau that in view of the fact that there are in the world two or three thousand varieties of wheat, that undoubtedly many new varieties will be found which will probably be preferable to those now grown in Morrow County, and it is the aim to try out such varieties that will appear to be suitable to this locality in very small plots and to do away if possible with expensive experiment by individual farmers, but will hold true to small experiment on small land where the Farm Bureau will be back of, gathering data and so forth. The application of sulphur to dry land wheat under summer-fallow conditions is something very new, something that has never been tried too extensively, but has in many localities given results that are very gratifying. All these things are going to be tried out by the County Committee on this line.

Labor

Under the head of the labor committee which is in charge of Ed. Reimann of Ione, it is expected that a great deal will be done to stabilize the wage situation among the harvest men during the season. It is hoped that it will be possible to make such an adjustment of wages, that not only will men stay on the job until the job is completed but that more satisfactory and better work will be

received, and that the men who are brought in from the outside can be handed and placed on the land to a great deal better advantage, and individual farmers who are looking for extra help may secure the same by the application through individual committee-men in each locality and know at first hand of any change in a County wage scale.

Co-operative Marketing

This project is in charge of R. W. Turner of Heppner, and under this head it is the plan of the executive committee, that the small shippers of live-stock, who have a few head of cows or calves or hogs or sheep or possibly some poultry, to send to market to pay a lower price than he would otherwise, if it were not for the surplus of butcher stock and by shipping in co-operative association they have proven that it is possible in other localities to save a very considerable amount of money and it is hoped that this may be found profitable in this locality. Another of the projects which will come under this head and has proven to be very satisfactory every where it has been tried out, is the County Wool Pool, where the small grower of wool is enabled to pool his wool together and hold for a larger price. These are some of the problems which will be taken up and discussed.

The Rodent control, which at the present time is one of the most important projects of the Farm Bureau, this is in the hands of three committee-men: Oscar Keithley, president of the Farm Bureau; Jack Hynd of Cecil and Jim Carty of Lexington. These men pass on all plans for handling the rabbit situation and the County Agent is their field representative in carrying on these plans. All money collected in furthering this campaign is turned over immediately to Mr. E. M. Hulton of Heppner, who is the Treasurer of the Association. All bills will be paid by him directly after they have been passed on and audited by this rodent control committee. In the spring when the sage-cat and ground-squirrels are dealing devastation to the wheat crop it is planned to be able to furnish poison in large quantities to the farmers with a saving of several cents per gallon, if enough interest is shown in various localities the local campaign will be put on and every man would be therein compelling to poison the land on his own place, this however is a matter which will be left to the local representative for determination and to the action of the County Court therein. In Baker County last year eighteen tons of poison oats which were distributed to their Farm Bureau in eradicating these ground-squirrels of that County, and a very successful campaign from the point of the extermination was conducted.

Irrigation and Alfalfa

This important project is in

charge of Mr. Matt Hughes of Lexington. The different methods of irrigation have many of them never been tried out in this locality and some interest is indicated along that line. Under this head will come the work in eradicating the alfalfa along the creek bottom, the application of sulphur to alfalfa and the introduction of different varieties of alfalfa for better yields. It is pertinent to notice that Deschutes County has increased her alfalfa yield by at least fifty per cent an acre by the application of eighty cents of sulphur per year, this is one of the most important things that face the farmers upon the irrigated lands. Another one of the problems which face the people along Willow Creek is the shortage of water, and this will be taken up and discussed by the irrigation committee of the Farm Bureau and it is hoped that a definite solution may be found for this problem.

Orchard Work

This project is in the hands of Mr. John Wightman of Heppner. It is a well known fact that on Rhea creek, around Heppner, and around Lexington, and in many other places, including around Irrigon, there is a great deal of senescent scale and fire blight and the eradication of this or these is absolutely essential to the protection of clean orchards, for this scale rapidly contaminates healthy trees to the agency of winds and birds, several orchards near Heppner and Lexington are practically dead due to the scale blights. An effective campaign will be put on at the proper time to do away with this work.

Livestock Improvement

Under this program which is in charge of Ed Rugg of Rhea Creek, it is hoped to introduce better breeding animals into Morrow County with the idea of building up the herds in this locality. It is generally conceded that the scrub animals actually eat more in a year's time than the well bred animal. It is simply because he is a poorer machine for transforming vegetable matter into animal flesh, and this is a problem which makes the scrub a far more expensive animal to raise, and when raised is worth several cents less per pound. It is a matter of purely business economy for the farmer whether he is raising dairy-cows or range stuff for doing this kind of work. Something along this line has been done in the shipping of several dairy-cows into the Boardman Irrigation section. It may be that a shipment of pure-bred bulls will be brought into Heppner in the spring.

Good Roads

Under the head of good roads, which project is in the charge of Adam Knoblock of Rhea Creek, it is

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